

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 13, 18, 19, and 21-23 have been amended. Claims 2-3 and 8 have been cancelled without prejudice. No new claims have been added to the present application. No new matter has been entered. After entry of the present claim amendments, claims 1-29 remain in this application.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,608,198 to Clark et al. Applicants note that Clark was not listed in the PTO-892 Notice of References Cited that accompanied the Office Action, and request that the Examiner issue an updated Notice of References Cited in the next communication, listing the Clark et al. reference.

Claim 1 has been amended to call for, *inter alia*, a structure in said cavity, the structure being adjacent to said vent chute and having an edge portion angled toward said at least one opening. Clark et al. does not disclose the arrangement claimed in claim 1 as amended, and claim 1 is believed to be patentable over Clark et al.

Claims 1-2, 6-10, 12, 16-19, 23-25, and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,225,791 to Nau et al. Independent claims 1, 9, 18, and 23 have been amended. Claim 1 has been amended to call for, *inter alia*, a structure in said cavity and adjacent to said vent chute and having an edge portion angled toward said at least one opening. Claim 9 has been amended to call for, *inter alia*, a wall structure disposed on said base in said at least one chamber area and adjacent said vent chute. Claim 18 has been amended to call for, *inter alia*, at least one structure adjacent said vent chute in said at least one chamber area and having a surface angled with respect to a floor of said base toward said vent chute opening. Claim 23 has been amended to call for, *inter alia*, means, adjacent said vent chute, for directing gas produced by said electrical interruption event generally toward said vent chute opening.

Nau et al. lacks these and other features, and therefore claims 1, 9, 18, and 23 are believed to be patentable thereover. The corresponding rejected dependent claims are believed to be patentable thereover for at least the reason that the respective independent claims from which they depend are patentable thereover.

Regarding claim 6, it has been amended to recite wherein said base includes a floor, said at least one opening being positioned a distance elevated from said floor, said angled edge portion of said structure providing a continuous surface from said floor to said at least one opening. Nau et al. lacks these features, and claim 6 is believed to be patentable thereover for at least this additional reason.

Regarding claim 10, it is believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the additional reason that Nau et al. fails to disclose that the area between the wall portion and said wall structure defines a protected area in which substantially no gas enters during said electrical interruption event.

Regarding claim 12, it is believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the additional reason that Nau et al. fails to disclose that said base further includes a floor, said opening of said vent chute being positioned a distance away from said floor, the arrangement further including an approach ramp adjacent said opening, said approach ramp having a surface leading away from said floor to direct said gas generally toward said opening and away from said floor.

Regarding claim 17, it is believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the additional reason that Nau et al. fails to disclose that said wall structure directs debris caused by an explosion of said gas generally away from said wall portion and generally toward said opening, said vent chute further directing at least some of said debris away from said circuit breaker during said electrical interruption event.

Regarding claim 19 as amended, it is believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the additional reason that Nau et al. fails to disclose: said base further includes a floor, said opening of said vent chute being elevated relative to said floor, the circuit breaker further including an approach ramp adjacent said vent chute opening, said approach ramp having a surface angled from said floor to said vent chute opening to elevate said gas generally toward said vent chute opening.

Regarding claim 27, it is believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the additional reason that Nau et al. fails to disclose that said structure is an approach ramp having a cross section that is generally one of a triangle and a trapezoid, said approach ramp elevating said gas toward said at least one opening during said electrical interruption event.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3-5 and 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Nau et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,164,693 to Yokoyama et al. Claims 11, 20, and 26 were rejected over Nau et al. Claims 21-22 were rejected over Nau et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,188,036 to Arnold et al.

Regarding independent claim 21, it has been amended to call for, *inter alia*, means, adjacent said vent chute, for directing gas produced by said electrical interruption event generally toward said vent chute opening, which both Nau et al. and Arnold et al. fail to disclose or suggest. Regarding claim 22, which depends from claim 21, it is believed to be patentable over Nau et al. in view of Arnold et al. for at least the additional reason that both Nau et al. and Arnold et al. fail to disclose said at least one structure generally forms a triangle having two edges exposed to said gas, said gas passing along said two edges generally toward respective ones of said first and second vent chutes.

Regarding claims 11, 20, and 26, they are believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the reasons set forth above responding to the § 102 rejections. Applicants disagree with the statement in the Office Action that the specific shape of the structure or approach ramp would have been an obvious matter of design choice. Office Action, at 4. Applicants' specification explains the significance of the shape of the approach ramp in the context of Applicants' invention:

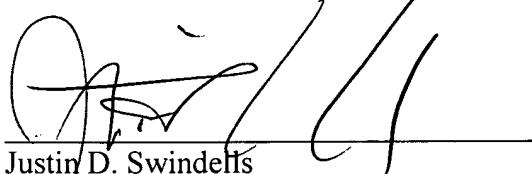
Note that in the embodiment shown in FIG. 4, the approach ramp 120 has a generally trapezoidal cross-section, and the edges of the approach ramp 120 may be smoothed for a more rounded profile. In other embodiments, the approach ramp 120 has a generally triangular cross-section. In still other embodiments, the exposed surface of the approach ramp 120 is rounded in a concave or convex manner. The guiding principle for the approach ramp is to present a smooth transition for the gas flow as it is elevated away from the floor 180 toward the vent chute opening 90a. Smooth transitions reduce turbulence which in turn reduces the overall pressure in the circuit breaker 10, and allows the gas to “find” the vent chute opening 90a quickly before excessive pressure can build up.

Applicants' Specification, ¶ 0023. Thus, claims 11, 20, and 26 are believed to be patentable over Nau et al. for at least the foregoing additional reason.

Conclusion

The Applicants submit that the claims are in a condition for allowance and action toward that end is earnestly solicited. No fees are believed to be due in connection with this response. However, should any fees be required (except for payment of the issue fee), the Commissioner is authorized to deduct the fees from Jenkens & Gilchrist, P.C. Deposit Account No. 10-0447, Order No. CRC-167/47181-00289USPT.

Respectfully submitted,



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